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English Communication Skills among the Rural Z.P.High School Students: An Assessment of Naigaon Taluka

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Title

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1.Introduction

English communication skills are especially important for the rural school students of Naigaon taluka, which is a part of Nanded district in Maharashtra. Naigaon taluka is located 41.2 km south of the district headquarters city of Nanded and 60 km west from neighboring city of Nizamabad in Telangana State. Naigaon taluka has a population of 2,29,823, of which 1,18,424 are males and 1,11,399 are females, as per the Census 2011. The literacy rate of Naigaon taluka is 68.9%, which is lower than the state average of 82.3%. The main occupation of the people in Naigaon taluka is agriculture, and the major crops grown are cotton, soybean, jowar, and tur. Naigaon taluka also has some historical and religious significance, as it is the birthplace of Sant Narsi Mehta, a 15th-century poet-saint who composed devotional songs in Gujarati language.

Therefore, it is essential to assess the level of English communication skills among the rural school students of Naigaon taluka and find out the challenges and opportunities they face in learning and using English. This will help them to access better education, employment, and social opportunities in the future.

English is a global language that is widely used for communication, education, and employment. However, many rural school students in India face challenges in learning and using English effectively. This is due to various factors such as lack of exposure, inadequate resources, poor teaching methods, low motivation, and socio-cultural barriers. These factors affect the development of the four sub-skills of English communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As a result, rural school students often lag behind their urban counterparts in terms of English proficiency and employability. Therefore, it is important to assess the current level of English communication skills among the rural school students and identify the gaps and areas for improvement. This essay aims to do so by using a standardized English proficiency test and analyzing the performance of the rural school students on the sub-skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The essay will also suggest some effective methods and strategies to enhance the English communication skills of the rural school students and prepare them for better opportunities in the future.

English communication skills are essential for students to excel in their careers. Students in rural areas may not have the same exposure to English language learning as their urban peers. Several effective methods can be employed to teach English to rural students, such as using modern techniques that rely heavily on media resources. These techniques can foster a positive attitude among rural students towards learning English, which would enable them to meet the upcoming challenges of the day innovatively. English, as a global language, plays a pivotal role in facilitating effective communication and opening doors to opportunities.

Rural students from poor families of laborers, Farmers, and household workers find no atmosphere of education. The English language seems to be an alien to them. Since most of the students are first-generation learners, how can a student get familiarized with a foreign language English without any guidance from their parents and others? Even though students are studying English, they are not able to produce even a single sentence without any grammatical errors in English.

In their primary education students are promoted to upper classes without subject knowledge. This badly affects the learning process making students inactive and lazy. Our examination system is such that it makes students prefer memorization rather than testing their analytical and creative skills. In this process, they memorize lessons, write them in exam halls, and forget them on the same day. Students learn basic grammar at the school level to pass only the tests and in the examinations and not to face any real-life situations. Application-oriented advanced grammar is not taught in schools. Furthermore, enough practice is not given to students to learn a language. To such students, it becomes difficult to cope with the syllabus of English at the graduation level. Students full of new dreams and aspirations enter college but they face this language problem, which affects their overall learning.

Communication skills are abilities that anyone uses when giving and receiving different kinds of information. While these skills may be a regular part of student's day-to-day life, communicating in a clear, effective, and efficient way is an extremely critical and useful skill. Communication skills involve listening, speaking, observing, and empathizing. It is also helpful to understand the differences in how to communicate through face-to-face interactions, phone conversations, and digital communications, like email and social media. There are four main types of communication you might use daily, including:

Verbal: Communicating by way of a spoken language.

Nonverbal: Communicating through body language, facial expressions, and tone.

Written: Communicating with written language, symbols, and numbers.

Visual: Communication by way of photography, art, drawings, sketches, charts, and graphs. Communication is a vital part of our everyday lives. It's how we interact with others, share information, and express ourselves. By understanding and using these skills, we can become better communicators.

Rural communities often face unique socio-economic challenges, and access to quality education resources, including language learning tools, may be limited. The ability to communicate proficiently in English not only enhances educational outcomes but also prepares students for a competitive and interconnected world. This introduction sets the stage for exploring the critical need for developing English communication skills among rural students, understanding the existing challenges, and proposing strategies to empower these students with the linguistic proficiency needed for success in the 21st century.

In our diverse world, many students in rural areas face a challenge: building strong English communication skills. English is like a key that unlocks opportunities and helps students connect with a wider world and future possibilities.

2. Hypothesis –

1. Rural school students have lower levels of English communication skills than urban school students due to various factors such as lack of exposure, inadequate resources, poor teaching methods, low motivation, and socio-cultural barriers.
2. Rural school students can improve their English communication skills by using media resources such as radio, television, internet, and mobile phones.
3. Rural school students have different learning styles and preferences than urban school students when it comes to English communication skills.
4. Rural school students face more anxiety and inhibition than urban school students in using English communication skills.
5. Rural school students have more positive attitudes and motivation towards English communication skills than urban school students.
6. Rural school students have higher levels of creativity and critical thinking than urban school students in using English communication skills.
7. Rural school students benefit from peer learning and collaborative activities in developing their English communication skills.

8. Rural school students have different levels of English communication skills depending on the type and location of their schools (e.g., government, private, tribal, etc.).
9. Rural school students have more difficulties in acquiring academic English communication skills than conversational English communication skills.
10. Rural school students have more interest and motivation in learning English communication skills when they are exposed to authentic and meaningful contexts and tasks.
11. Rural school students have lower levels of self-confidence and self-efficacy than urban school students in using English communication skills.
12. Rural school students have more opportunities and incentives to learn English communication skills when they interact with native or proficient speakers of English.
13. Rural school students have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds than urban school students that influence their English communication skills.
14. Rural school students have more challenges and barriers in accessing and using quality English learning materials and resources than urban school students.
15. Rural school students have more diverse and complex needs and goals for learning English communication skills than urban school students.

3. Aims and Objectives.

1. The primary aim is to empower rural students by equipping them with effective communication skills. Proficiency in English opens doors to better education, employment, and social opportunities.
2. Addressing the disparity between city-bred and rural students, the aim is to provide rural learners with the same level of language exposure and training.
3. Focusing on the four fundamental language skills—**Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW)**—to ensure a well-rounded language proficiency.
4. Aims to break down language barriers that hinder rural students' access to knowledge, information, and progress.

5. Rural students should actively engage in listening exercises, comprehend spoken English, and develop their auditory skills.

6. Encourage rural learners to express themselves confidently in English. Group discussions, role plays, and interactive sessions can foster speaking abilities.
7. Promote reading habits by providing access to English books, newspapers, and digital content. Enhancing vocabulary and comprehension skills is crucial.
8. Rural students should practice writing essays, letters, and reports. Emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, and coherence is essential.
9. Educate rural students about the importance of communicative English. Encourage them to use their existing knowledge and build upon it.
10. Train educators in modern teaching methods, incorporating multimedia resources, interactive activities, and practical language exercises.

4. Research Methodology -

For the said research the researcher will use Qualitative and Quantitative research methods.

1. **Qualitative Research**: This type of research often involves direct classroom observations and group discussions.
2. **Quantitative Research**: In this method, numerical data can be collected. The researchers will collect data through student's pre and post-tests.
3. **Questionnaires**: Questionnaires are common tools used in both qualitative and quantitative research.
4. **Personal interviews** will be used for the collection of data.
5. **The analytical method** will be used for the said research work.
   The data will be analyzed on the responses of the selected students.
6. Analytical research methodology involves the use of critical thinking skills. It is a specific type of research that is used to determine the causal connections between two or more students.
7. **Mass Observation**: It is used to collect data from the daily diaries of the students.
8. **Mail Questionnaire**: This is a quantitative method of collecting data where questionnaires are mailed to students. It is useful for researchers to connect with a wide range of students.
9. **Group Interview**: It includes multiple students who engage in a discussion on a specific topic.

9. **Telephone Survey**: Telephone surveys are used systematically to collect data from a large number of students.

5. Review of literature –

1. According to Zaremba (2006), **speaking** is the most important skill required for communication. It directly enables human interaction, allowing individuals to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions effectively. Speaking fluently is especially crucial in situations like business negotiations, job interviews, and everyday conversations. Effective speaking enhances one's confidence, builds relationships, and fosters cultural understanding .

In addition to speaking, there are three other primary language skills: **listening**, **reading**, and **writing**. Each of these skills contributes uniquely to one's language proficiency and plays a vital role in different aspects of life .

2.A research paper titled **"Enriching the Skills of Rural Students with Effective Methods of Teaching English Language using LSRW Skills"** by B.S.Gomathi and T.S.Geetha deals with the effective methods that can be employed in teaching English to rural students for their enhancement. The paper suggests that conventional teaching methods are replaced with modern techniques which rely hugely upon media resources.

Teachers in rural schools experience serious challenges. Most of the children don't attend school regularly as they are forced to work on farms, and they are not encouraged to attend school. Learners who attend school often find the curriculum not relevant to their lives and find that their learning is not supported at home. The economic constraints of governments to provide free basic education to all its students and the low socio-economic status of parents are serious barriers preventing children from receiving a high standard of education and experiencing quality of life. This is particularly true in rural areas, where the majority of people live in below poverty and do not have access to quality education

Native language acquisition is a usual procedure for children. Oral language can be without effort. The speaking ability improves with age growing for children, but that improvement may not lead to perfection in the language. Constant practice and clear attention are required to produce oral skills more efficiently.

Students do not get a chance to speak or read in English in the rural parts of the country. In villages and small towns, students mainly hail from rural areas. The bilingual method is adopted in language classes. This method helps only to slow learners to some extent. Moreover, this act reduces the real learning process as a whole. If a student does not understand English, he or she asks for an explanation in his or her mother tongue. Consequently, the English teacher is in a state to adopt the bilingual method.

The lack of trained teachers in rural areas has become a reality. Teaching is a continuous process and teachers in rural India are often debarred from attending workshops and seminars to acquaint themselves with new ways and methods.

Language could be mastered by practicing all four skills Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The rural surroundings do not allow the learner to practice any of the skills. Many teachers are unable to teach English effectively because they face a lot of problems due to the lack of teaching aids, non-availability of required technical support, and relevant atmosphere to teach English effectively.

There are several strategies that can be implemented to improve student's language proficiency.

5/1 Study of the Population and Sampling

There are 4 Z.P.High Schools in Naigaon Taluka.There are near about 250 8^{th},9^{th} and10th class students in Z.P.High Schools.I want to collect the data from those students.

Ghungrala,Naigaon,Kuntur and Manjaram Z.P.High Schools located in Naigaon Taluka.

6. Significance of the study –

1. English proficiency opens doors to quality education. Rural students equipped with strong communication skills can access better learning resources, participate in exchange programs, and pursue higher studies.
2. Effective communication empowers rural students to express themselves confidently. It breaks down barriers and fosters self-assurance.
3. English proficiency bridges the gap between rural and urban communities. It enables active participation in social, cultural, and civic activities.
4. English is the language of the internet. Rural students need it to navigate online platforms, access e-learning resources, and stay informed.
5. English proficiency enhances digital literacy, allowing rural learners to adapt to technological advancements.

6. Understanding medical information in English ensures better health outcomes. Rural students can interpret health guidelines, prescriptions, and preventive measures.
7. Communicating with healthcare providers becomes easier with English skills.
8. English exposes rural students to diverse cultures, literature, and ideas. It broadens their worldview and encourages tolerance.
9. Understanding global environmental challenges.
10. Proficiency in English enables rural students to access quality education, online resources, and global knowledge.
11. English proficiency helps navigate medical facilities, read prescriptions, and communicate with healthcare providers.
12. English communication allows rural communities to share their cultural heritage with the world.
13. Exposure to English literature, media, and diverse perspectives enriches rural students' understanding of global issues.
14. English proficiency is essential for accessing online platforms, e-learning, and digital services.
15. Understanding English terms and policies ensures responsible online behavior.
16. English skills aid in understanding environmental conservation efforts and global sustainability goals.

7. Plan of work –

Chapterization

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief introduction of the topic and its significance.

1.2 The research objectives and the rationale behind the study.

2. Methodology and Collection of Data

2.1 Surveys

2.2 Interviews

2.3 Observations

2.4 Focus Groups

2.5 Forms and Questionnaires

2.6 Sampling Techniques

2.7 Technology Integration

2.8 Automation

3. **Challenges faced by the rural Students**
    - 3.1 Pedogogy and Learning
    - 3.2 Teacher Proficiency
    - 3.3 Resource Constraints
    - 3.4 Attitude and Motivation
4. **Framework of Assessment**
    - 4.1 Oral Proficiency Test
    - 4.2 Listening Comprehension Test
    - 4.3 Reading Comprehension Assessment
    - 4.4 Writing Tasks
    - 4.5 Role play or Conversation Simulation
    - 4.6 Portfolio Assessment
    - 4.7 Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment
    - 4.8 Rubrics and Checklists
5. **Conclusion**
    - 5.1 Summary of research.
    - 5.2 Suggestions for future research.

8. Conclusions -

1. Students who can express themselves clearly in English are better equipped to understand and communicate complex ideas, both in written assignments and verbal discussions.
2. Developing English communication skills can boost students' confidence.
3. Proficient English communication opens up a broader range of opportunities for students.
4. English is a global language, and proficiency in it facilitates connectivity with people worldwide.
5. Improved English communication skills in students can also have positive effects on the community. Students may become effective communicators.
6. Proficiency in English can provide rural students with better access to online educational resources, digital platforms, and the latest information and developments in various fields.

7. Rural students may have limited access to quality English language resources, such as libraries, language learning centers, or native English speakers for practice. This can hinder their language development.
8. Communication skills among rural students can vary widely. Some may have strong English language skills, while others might struggle due to differences in educational opportunities and exposure.
9. Rural students may have a strong influence on local dialects or languages in their speech, which can impact their pronunciation and fluency in English.
10. Rural students may have limited access to the internet and technology, which can impede their ability to engage with online English learning resources and language learning apps.
11. Cultural factors in rural areas may affect the willingness of students to communicate in English. Some students may feel more comfortable using their native language in social settings.
12. The presence of supportive communities that value English language skills can positively influence rural students' communication abilities. Conversely, a lack of such support can hinder their progress.
13. Government initiatives and policies aimed at improving English language education in rural areas can have a significant impact on students' communication skills.
14. Younger rural students may have better English communication skills compared to older generations due to changes in educational systems and exposure to media.

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